



Afternoon Alert - Thursday, December 14, 2017

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HEADLINES

Noon news

Most networks led with reports on an incident in which a window fell from a CH-53 U.S. military helicopter onto an elementary school playground near MCAS Futenma, saying that Okinawa Governor Onaga will visit Tokyo this afternoon to lodge a protest with the Ministry of Defense and others. NHK reported that the Okinawa police inspected the helicopter in question at MCAS Futenma this morning. NTV gave top play to a report that next year Rakuten will file a request for authorization to become Japan's fourth cell-phone carrier.

INTERNATIONAL

White House “corrects” Secretary Tillerson’s remarks on North Korea

TBS reported at noon that although Secretary Tillerson announced on Tuesday that the U.S. is ready to hold its first meeting with North Korea without preconditions, a NSC spokesperson released a statement saying : "In light of the recent missile test by North Korea, it is clear that now is not the time for dialogue." The network said National Security Adviser McMaster and State Department spokesperson Nauert also made "course corrections" following the Secretary's remarks. McMaster was quoted as saying: "When he said there will be no preconditions, what that means is, we're not going to relieve any pressure on North Korea or give in to any demands they might make for payoffs." DOS Spokesperson Nauert was also quoted as saying: "At some point, we would like to do that, but our policy has not changed." The network said it has come to light that the Secretary's remarks do not reflect a unified view of the administration, revealing its disarray over North Korea policy.

- [White House dismisses Tillerson’s offer for talks with N. Korea](#) (Kyodo News)

- [In move that could alienate Japan, Tillerson says U.S. willing to talk to North Korea 'without preconditions'](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Gov't perplexed by Sec. Tillerson's offer to talk with North Korea "without preconditions"](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Tillerson's North Korea shift stirs little hope](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Police search Tokyo firm over illegal exports to N. Korea](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Cartoon: Kanji of the year](#) (Asahi)
- [PM Abe to visit East European countries in mid-January](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Abe, Guterres meet in Tokyo, to discuss N. Korean crisis](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan, Russia hold high-level security dialogue in Moscow](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan to give Senegal \\$32 mil. aid for health care, infrastructure](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Japan pledges \\$2.9 bil. for universal health coverage](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Cartoon: President Trump and PM Abe](#) (Akahata)

ECONOMY

- [Japan to cut price of infamously expensive cancer drug again](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan, UK agree to cooperate on energy and space at bilateral industrial policy dialogue](#) (Nikkei)
- [60% of companies say they will increase investment in human resources in FY2018, Nikkei poll of 100 companies](#) (Nikkei)
- [80% of executives say economy will still be expanding in half a year, Nikkei poll of 100 companies](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Monju reactor will be decommissioned, but mountain of uncertainty remains](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Nvidia to help Komatsu automate construction machinery](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Dec. 13, 2017](#) (Nikkei)

- [Coordination underway to convene regular Diet session on Jan. 22](#) (Mainichi)

SCIENCE

- [Venture firm plotting Japan's first moon landing in 2020](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)

EDUCATION

Number of Japanese researchers studying in U.S. drops sharply

NHK reported this morning that Japanese science is in crisis and one of the factors is the decline in the number of researchers studying abroad. In particular, the number of researchers studying in the U.S. has dropped sharply to one-third of the figure of 15 years ago. The network reported on a 37-year-old Japanese researcher currently studying at Duke University who had hesitated to study in the U.S. at first because he had to give up his job as an assistant professor at Nagoya University. The network said although 9,691 Japanese studied at graduate schools in the U.S. in 2001, the number had dropped to 2,967 in 2016. On the other hand, the number of Chinese studying at graduate schools in the U.S. is increasing. In 2016, over 120,000 Chinese studied in the U.S., which is about 40 times the number of Japanese. The network said the Chinese researchers are allowed to keep their jobs at home while studying in the U.S. and therefore continue to receive their salaries, adding that some of them even receive donations. The Japanese researcher studying at Duke University said in an interview: "Coming to the U.S. has made it hard for me to go back to Japan and secure a position.... In that sense, it has become difficult to study abroad."

Nobel laureate Ryoji Noyori said: "Japan's tendency to close doors to foreign nations and the apprentice system at universities have become decisive weak spots. I think it is essential for Japanese researchers to go out in the world and get trained and broaden their perspective. We need a system that highly values those who have studied abroad and who engage in joint research with people from other nations."

SOCIETY

Children's brains affected when parents fight in front of them

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" reported on recent research jointly conducted by Fukui University and Harvard University, which found that when children see their parents fighting verbally or physically on a daily basis, part of the visual cortex of their brains shrinks. The program said this could impact the children's ability to memorize or learn and cause them to easily become angry or fearful. The program advised parents to avoid arguing in front of their children.

- [A record 3,205 foreign trainees disappear in 1st half of the year](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)

- [Council set up for foreign technical interns in fisheries](#) (Nikkei)

TRENDING@JAPAN

- [Babies in the legislature – brave move or grandstanding?](#) (Asahi, Mainichi, Yomiuri, Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Japanese young people prefer experiences to possessions](#) (Yomiuri)
- [“Instabae,” “sontaku” are top buzzwords in 2017](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

SECURITY

Residents around Futenma base exposed to danger for years

Nightly TV news programs on Wednesday reported extensively on the incident earlier in the day in which a window fell from a U.S. military helicopter onto the playground of an elementary school next to MCAS Futenma, noting that accidents involving Futenma-based aircraft have been occurring repeatedly. NHK said that since the reversion of Okinawa to Japanese administration in 1972, a total of 123 such incidents occurred through February this year, including the crash of a CH-53 aircraft on a local college campus in 2004. The number of incidents in which objects fell from Okinawa-based U.S. military airplanes amounted to 67 from 1972 through November this year. Okinawa was infuriated by the latest mishap because it took place only a week after an object belonging to a Futenma-based CH-53 helicopter was discovered on the roof of a local daycare center and because Wednesday marked the first anniversary of the shallow landing by an Osprey off the coast of Nago. NHK pointed out that U.S. military planes frequently fly over the elementary school when taking off and landing at the base apparently in violation of a bilateral flight route arrangement. Japanese aviation experts pointed out that mishaps involving this type of helicopter have occurred repeatedly perhaps on account of the model's dilapidation, speculating that the cause of the latest one may be improper maintenance.

Former Kyodo News managing editor Goto said on TV-Asahi that although the U.S. and Japan have sealed various arrangements on ensuring the safety of U.S. military flights, the recurrence of mishaps signifies that none of those arrangements have been upheld properly. He speculated that the GOJ is hesitant to strongly press the U.S. side to improve flight safety since the presence of the U.S. military is becoming even more important nowadays in the face of North Korea's relentless provocations. The journalist speculated that the cause of the latest incident may be related to "fatigue" on the part of U.S. military mechanics and personnel since the U.S. military has intensified its training drills to respond to the escalated tension on the Korean Peninsula.

Japan to earmark largest defense budget ever to purchase American equipment

Tuesday's TV-Asahi "Hodo Station" ran a nine-minute report on Japan's soaring defense spending, attributing the surge to the Trump administration's pressure to purchase more American military equipment. Japan's defense budget for FY2018 will top \$47.7 billion, the largest amount ever, due in part to the planned procurement of extremely expensive U.S. defense hardware, such as F-35As, two Aegis Ashore batteries, Ospreys, and Global Hawks. The broadcaster claimed that the introduction of these costly American products is taking a toll on some elements of SDF operations, quoting an unnamed ASDF officer as saying: "We are not able to purchase necessary parts on account of the ridiculously expensive F-35s. Our response capabilities have dropped as a result because the operational rates of fighter jets have declined."

The report said the USG will charge Japan exorbitant amounts for American equipment to be purchased under the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program, which reportedly allows Washington to decide on prices unilaterally. Japan's purchase of U.S. defense hardware under FMS has increased sharply in the past four years. An unnamed high-ranking SDF official said: "We can't say no to U.S. price estimates. In addition, they often raise the prices later." The procurement cost for one Aegis Ashore platform will increase from the initial estimate of \$720 million to \$910 million. An influential member of the LDP "defense clique" said: "We have to rely on FMS in order to introduce state-of-the-art military equipment, but it is true that the SDF may not be able to secure enough budget for some of its essential operations if FMS spending continues to increase."

A regular commentator took issue with the Defense Ministry's decision to procure long-range cruise missiles to be mounted on ASDF aircraft, insisting that there has not been enough discussion within the LDP and the GOJ on procuring such missiles that apparently provide the capability to strike enemy bases, which is prohibited under the Constitution. He also claimed that some GOJ officials justified the purchase of expensive American hardware to ensure Washington's defense commitment to Japan.

- [Okinawa police check helicopter inside U.S. base](#) (NHK, Online)
- [Gov't fears U.S. chopper incident may affect Henoko relocation, Nago mayoral election](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Ruling, opposition parties react to U.S. military chopper accident in Okinawa](#) (Sankei)
- [Editorial: U.S. chopper mishap again shows dangers of Futenma base](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Editorial: Introduce long-range cruise missiles steadily to strengthen deterrence](#) (The Japan News)

- [Editorial: 'Defense only' posture under threat from new missile policy](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [Japan rattled by 83 North Korean 'ghost ship' arrivals](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [A spike in 'ghost boats' points to North Korea's growing desperation](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

Okinawa's distrust of U.S. military, GOJ reaches new peak following helicopter incident

Okinawa's two major dailies gave heavy coverage to Wednesday's incident involving a Futenma-based CH-53, stressing that the anger, frustration, and anxiety among local officials have reached a new peak, as accidents involving U.S. military aircraft have occurred repeatedly despite the U.S. military's and central government's pledges to prevent them. The papers said Okinawa's rage has been amplified by the apparent absence of effective measures to eliminate the danger. While highlighting an apology offered to the vice governor by Commander Paul Rock of Marine Corps Installations Pacific, they reiterated calls for the immediate closure of the Futenma Air Base on the grounds that there is no other way to eliminate the danger associated with Futenma aircraft. Ryukyu Shimpō added that the local police probably will not be able to build a case because Japan's Aviation Law does not apply to the U.S. military.

- [Only 18% of crimes committed by U.S. military are prosecuted, less than half rate for Japan overall](#) (Ryukyu Shimpō)